

TEACHER DIRECTIONS: September 11, 2001 — 25 Years Later

Overview: In this project-based learning activity, students serve as members of a youth advisory team helping develop a 25th anniversary educational exhibit about September 11, 2001. Students rotate through five investigation stations using Gale resources to explore the events of September 11, their historical context, the U.S. response, the experiences of different groups, and the lasting changes that followed. The investigation culminates in a proposal answering the driving question: **Twenty-five years later, what should students understand and remember about September 11th and its lasting impact?**

Before the Activity: Divide students into teams of approximately 3–5 students. Provide students with access to the appropriate Gale resources available at your school. Determine how students will record evidence. This may be on paper or in a shared digital document. Decide whether students will rotate physically through stations or move through them digitally. *Preview resources, particularly images, video, and personal accounts, for age appropriateness and potentially distressing content.*

Recommended resources include: *(Be sure you have the Gale resource below open before selecting the link)*

- **Gale In Context: Middle School** – [9/11 Event Guide](#)
- **Gale In Context: High School** – [9/11 Event Guide](#)
- **Gale In Context: US History** – [9/11 and Its Aftermath](#)
- **Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints** – [9/11 Attacks](#)

Suggested Timing: Structure timing depending on grade level and the depth of research expected. Stations may be completed during one extended class period, across multiple class periods, or over several days.

During the Investigation: At each station, students should:

- Read the station's investigation questions.
- Search the recommended Gale resource type. Select reliable evidence that helps answer the questions.
- Record important facts, quotations, examples, or perspectives.
- Record the title and citation for at least one Gale source.
- Discuss how the evidence contributes to the overall driving question.

For Station 4: Consider assigning or encouraging different teams to investigate different perspectives.

For Station 5: Students select two or three areas of change rather than investigating every category.

Teacher Role: Act as a facilitator rather than the source of the answers. Help students refine searches, evaluate sources, distinguish between evidence and opinion, recognize differing perspectives, and make connections among stations. For middle school students, consider providing suggested search terms and/or preselected Gale Topic Pages. High school students can conduct more independent searches and investigate more complex questions involving foreign policy, surveillance, civil liberties, and historical interpretation.

STUDENT DIRECTIONS: September 11, 2001 — 25 Years Later

Your Role:

You are a member of a youth advisory team helping create a 25th anniversary educational exhibit about September 11, 2001. Your team has been asked to investigate what happened, how the United States responded, how different people experienced the events and their aftermath, and what changed in the years that followed. Your investigation will help you answer one big question: **Twenty-five years later, what should students understand and remember about September 11th and its lasting impact?**

Your Investigation:

Working with your team, move through five investigation stations. At each station:

- Read the investigation questions.
- Use the suggested type of Gale resource to research the topic.
- Discuss what you discover with your group.
- Record important evidence that could help you answer the driving question.
- Record the title and citation for at least one Gale source you used.

Do not try to write down everything you find. Look for evidence that seems important, meaningful, surprising, or useful for understanding the larger story.

Case Study: September 11, 2001 — 25 Years Later

You are a member of a youth advisory team helping create a 25th anniversary educational exhibit about September 11, 2001. Your team has been asked to investigate not only what happened on September 11th, but also how the attacks changed the United States and affected different groups of people.

Working in teams, move through a series of investigation stations. Each station uses a different type of Gale resource and explores a different part of the story. At each station, collect evidence that will help your group decide:

Twenty-five years later, what should students understand and remember about September 11th and its lasting impact?



STATION 1: The Events of September 11th

Gale Resource Type: News Article and/or Reference

Investigation Questions

- What happened on September 11, 2001?
- Where did the attacks occur?
- Who carried out the attacks?
- What were the immediate consequences?
- How did Americans learn about and respond to the events as they unfolded?

Evidence Collected

- Timeline of major events
- Locations and people involved
- Lives lost and immediate damage
- Initial reactions from government officials and the public



STATION 2: Understanding the Context

Gale Resource Type: Reference Article

Investigation Questions

- Who was al-Qaeda?
- What factors contributed to the rise of international terrorism before 2001?
- Why was the United States targeted?
- What events or conflicts before September 11 help explain the attacks?

Evidence Collected

- Key people and organizations
- Important vocabulary
- Historical and geopolitical background
- Factors that contributed to the attacks



STATION 3: A Nation Responds

Gale Resource Type: News Article, Primary Source, or Government Document

Investigation Questions

- How did the U.S. government respond immediately after the attacks?
- What was the “War on Terror”?
- Why did the United States go to war in Afghanistan?
- What new security measures or government policies were introduced?
- How did Americans debate the balance between security and individual rights?

Evidence Collected

- Government responses
- Military actions
- New security measures
- Patriot Act and surveillance policies
- Arguments about security and civil liberties

Gale, here for **everyone.**



STATION 4: Different People, Different Experiences

Gale Resource Type: Primary Sources, Interviews, Images, Video, Biographies, or Personal Accounts

Select a perspective to further investigate. Possible perspectives include:

- Survivors and families of victims
- First responders
- People living in New York City or Washington, D.C.
- Muslim Americans
- Sikh Americans and others who experienced anti-Muslim discrimination
- Members of the U.S. military and their families
- Afghan civilians
- Students and young people living through 9/11
- Journalists covering the attacks



Investigation Questions

- How did September 11th affect this person or group?
- What fears, challenges, or changes did they experience?
- How might their perspective on September 11th differ from someone else's?
- What part of the 9/11 story becomes visible when we listen to this group?

Evidence Collected: Personal experiences; quotations or testimony; examples of loss, service, discrimination, resilience, or change; evidence showing how experiences differed among groups.

STATION 5: What Changed?

Gale Resource Type: News Article, Magazine Article, Journal Article, or Report

SELECT 2 OR 3 AREAS OF CHANGE TO EXPLORE	
Security	American Society
• How did airport security change? • How did national security agencies change? • What new surveillance practices emerged?	• How were Muslim Americans and other communities affected? • Did attitudes toward immigration or religion change?
Government & Civil Liberties	First Responders & Public Health
• What was the Patriot Act? • How did debates over privacy and surveillance change?	• What long-term health problems affected people who worked or lived near Ground Zero?
Foreign Policy	Culture & Memory
• How did September 11th influence U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq? • How did the War on Terror shape American foreign policy?	• How is September 11th remembered today? • How have memorials, museums, anniversaries, films, and media shaped the way later generations understand it?

Investigation Questions

- What changed because of September 11th?
- Which changes were temporary?
- Which changes can still be seen 25 years later?
- Were all these changes viewed positively?
- Who benefited from or was harmed by particular changes?

Evidence Collected

- Specific changes
- Short- vs. long-term effects
- Evidence of continuing impact
- Differing viewpoints about those changes

FINAL TASK

Your Task: Your youth advisory team must submit a proposal to the committee developing a 25th Anniversary of September 11th educational exhibit for students.

Your Proposal Should Answer:

1. What are the three most important things future generations should understand about September 11, 2001?
2. How did September 11th change the United States?
3. Which people or perspectives must be represented in the story of September 11th? Why?
4. What evidence from your investigation best supports your conclusions?
5. Twenty-five years later, what lesson—or question—should visitors leave the exhibit thinking about?



View possible proposal options on the next page.

FINAL PRODUCT OPTIONS

Your Task: Select one of the options below as the format for your final proposal.

FINAL PRODUCT	AUTHENTIC AUDIENCE
25th anniversary museum exhibit proposal	Museum or historical society
Six-item digital exhibit	Students and community members
Curator's recommendation brief	9/11 Memorial education team
25th anniversary commemorative webpage	School or district community
Podcast episode: <i>What Changed After 9/11?</i>	Students and families
"Six Things Every Student Should Know About 9/11" exhibit	Future students
Documentary storyboard	School or community audience